Library of Congress 100 Years Old; Is Third Largest Library In World

—By— Rene Bache

Destroyed by the British When They Burned Washington, It Gets a New Start With Jefferson's Collections.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Oct. 16.—One hundred years ago the Library of Congress—which ought properly to be called the National Library—was born. War brought it into being. The great book-collection may be said to have sprung from the burning of the capitol by the British, in 1814.

Congress had possessed a small collection of 3,000 volumes, for the use of its members, which the fire destroyed. In October of the following year, 1815, it bought from Thomas Jefferson his private collection of 7000 volumes, which was the nucleus of the present National Library. Later on it published a catalog of these books prepared by Jefferson himself.

By 1851 the collection had grown to 55,000 volumes; but in that year another fire, of accidental origin, wiped out all but 20,000 of them. At the close of the civil war the library possessed only 84,000 printed books, whereas at the present time there are over 2,00,000, without reckoning a multitude of manuscripts.

Is Now Third Largest.

Eventually, it is believed, this national collection will be the greatest in the world. It now stands third in rank—the great library of France (the Bibliotheque Nationale) possessing 3,500,000 volumes, and the British Museum 2,500,000. Fourth, in some respects, comes the library of the Vatican, at Rome; but its library treasures are in such confusion, for lack of proper arrangement and cataloging, that the student who endeavors to make search among them is like an explorer who invades territory as yet unexplored.

The making of maps, by far the greatest cartographic collection in the world, so far as America is concerned, is the property of the Library of Congress. It includes numerous curiosities, among which are old-time charts showing the peninsula of Lower California as an island. From other maps one learns the reason why New Yorkers of the present day call the Hudson, where it flows by the metropolis, the North river. It is because in former days the Delaware was known as the South river, the two streams being thus distinguished. But in the latter case the name has not stuck.

Buys 80,000 Russian Books.

As might be expected, our national library is rich beyond all rivals in "Americana"—in books and other documents relating to this continent, and especially to the United States. But is will be a surprise to most people to learn that it owns more literature relating to Russia than can be found anywhere else outside the czar's domains. Not very long ago it bought a collection of 80,000 volumes concerning the history of Russia from a Siberian lumber merchant named Yudin, for $50,000—the price being so small in proportion to the value of the acquisition that Mr. Putnam, the librarian of congress, spoke of it as "practically a gift." The most importantly interesting part of this collection, from an American viewpoint, comprises works bearing upon Alaska in early days, when that Arctic province of Uncle Sam's was a Muscovite possession.

Has 600,000 Musical Volumes.

If a person wished to write an account of the development of opera, from its earliest beginnings to the present day, there is no place in the world where he could get hold of such valuable material for his purpose as in the library of congress. That establishment contains the third greatest store of musical compositions in existence, comprising 600,000 volumes and piece. It also possesses 45,000 bound volumes of newspapers, dating back to the beginning of such publications in this country; and its collection of American 18th century news journals is unrivaled.

Early Archives of New Mexico.

The collection of manuscript "Americana" includes the private and official papers of Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and six other presidents, as well as many of the papers of Benjamin Franklin; also the records of the Continental congress, and the "orderly books" (containing military orders from day to day) of the American army during the revolution. It embraces, as an incidental item, the early archives of New Mexico; and those of California, pertaining to the same period would be likewise in the library, but for the unfortunate fact that, kept at home for the gratification of State pride, they were destroyed in the fire which followed the great earthquake of a few years ago.

Knew Every Book.

In 1864 Ainsworth R. Spofford was appointed librarian of congress. Not without reason was he called the "human library index," inasmuch as he always seemed to know the exact place of a fact in a book and the exact place of that book on the shelves. But, though he held the job until 1897, he failed to acquire much notion of modern methods, and during this incumbency there was not even a proper card catalog of subjects. Thus it was the congressmen were accustomed to say, "How shall we be able to find a book, or anything we want to know, when good old Spoff departs this life."

Mr. Spofford was incidentally copyright officer, and thereby hangs an amusing tale. Being interested in books and not at all in copyrights, and sufficiently occupied with his duties as Librarian, he would put aside the money orders, received from day to day in payment for copyright fees, sometimes in one drawer or another, sometimes between the leaves of odd volumes, and sometimes in other haphazard places. The money order division of the postoffice department wrote him time and time again that numerous orders addressed to him had never been cashed. He always replied courteously that he would attend to the matter, and then—forgot. At length a formal inquiry was made, and Spofford, though held guiltless of any intended wrong, was required to make good the missing funds to the extent of $30,000. The management of the library and copyright business passing soon afterwards into other hands, nearly all of the missing money orders turned up, being discovered a few at a time in pigeon-holes and other unsuspected spots, and the bulk of the cash was returned eventually to the absent-minded man of books.

Meanwhile, the quarters long occupied by the library in the capitol were a cause of much complaint, being so cramped that thousands of books were piled in heaps on the floor. "Old Man Spoff" did not care particularly; he knew in what pile every book was. But there were other persons who thought the arrangement unsuitable for the national book collection. The subject came up for serious discussion in Congress, and the upshot of the matter was that an appropriation was made to erect the beautiful library building which today is one of the principal architectural ornaments of Washington.

World's Finest Library Building.

The cornerstone was laid in 1886, and the structure was completed in 1897, at a cost of $6,532,000. It covers three and a half acres. The bookstacks, which are independent of the building itself, though embraced within it, provide accomodation for 3,500,000 volumes; and when required, this capacity can be extended to 7,000,000 volumes. The shelves now available for use, if placed end to end, would extend from Philadelphia to New York and ten miles beyond.

This is without comparison the finest building for library uses existing anywhere in the world. The book-stacks are of iron, the shelves, of the same material (polished and lacquered to render them rust-proof), being of a gridiron pattern, to help ventilation. Books, like human beings, need fresh air, deprived of which they are liable to be attacked by mold. It is desirable, also, that they shall be kept cool, because heat affects them injuriously. They will not catch fire, and cannot be burned, unless surrounded by very active combustibles—a condition impossible in metal racks, in a building of brick and marble.

A rather curious circumstance in relation to the library is the jealousy which congress—not so much of late as formerly—has shown in regard to it. Originally it was understood to be distinctively the library of congress. As it has grown, congress has accepted with much reluctance the idea that it was to be looked upon as belonging to the public. Members have protested time and time again against any such development of its utility, asserting that it must be considered as possessing no other important function than that of a collection for reference by representatives and senators, only within very recent years, indeed, has congress come to realize that the development of this great book collection along modern lines must depend upon the recognition of it as a national institution, for the benefit and use of the people at large.

The people's money pays for it, congress making an annual appropriation of about $850,000. Of this amount approximately $100,000 is spent for the purchase of new books. But the net expenditure is not much over half a million dollars yearly, inasmuch as the copyright office turns in more than $180,000 per annum, derived from fees, and the profits yielded by the "card section" (the function of which will presently be described) run beyond $35,000 in a twelve month.

Only Members May Borrow.

Some comfort from the Congressmen's point of view, may be derived from the fact that they, and nobody else, have a right under the law to borrow books from the library—though volumes may be lent, at the discretion of the librarian, to other people. Furthermore, quite extraordinary means are used to place the collection conveniently at their disposal, a tunnel for the purpose, 1200 feet long, having been made to connect the library building with the capitol. At the capitol end, in a room adjoining the old house of representatives, is a receiving and delivery station for books. When a member wants a book, he need only write the title of it on a scrap of paper, and it is shot in a jiffy through a pneumatic tube to the reading desk in the library; whereupon the volume is promptly fetched through the tunnel on a tray swung from an endless cable, and placed on the member's desk by a livery messenger. The process of transportation requires only three minutes.

Perhaps the most striking feature of the library of congress today is the automatic character of the service it affords. Everything possible is relegated to machinery. Thus, for example, the books are delivered to readers, and returned to the book-stacks, almost wholly by mechanical means. An endless chain, carrying a series of wire trays, transports from the stacks and dumps at the reading desk (in the center of the great circular room) the volumes that are called for. When a book is to be returned to its shelf, the attendant utilizes the same mechanism, by pointing a pointer at a number on a dial corresponding with the "deck" in the book-stack for which it is destined. The machine drops it off quietly at that deck. All of this work is accomplished noiselessly, and as if through operation of magic, by concealed electric motors.

Lends Books to Libraries.

The library of congress now makes a business of lending its books to other libraries all over the country. This is a new departure of great practical usefulness. Only a relatively few persons are so situated as to be able to visit the national library; but, with the aid of the cheap book post, its facilities are extended to every corner of the nation. Scholars can turn to the library of congress for help as naturally as farmers turn to the department of agriculture; books are even mailed to them direct under certain conditions.

Even newer, and promising indefinite future extension, is a system in international library loans, books being now freely lent by the library of congress to the national libraries of other countries. When this work has been fully developed, it will be possible for a reader anywhere in the world to avail himself of information existing in any great library of the world—the plan as will understood, being reciprocal among all the national libraries.

The library of congress, as at present conducted, regards itself not merely as a center of research, but as an institution for the diffusion of knowledge on the widest possible scale. One of its functions is that of a bureau of information, and in this capacity it is always ready to respond by mail to inquiries as to what printed material exists on a given subject, and where this material may be found.

Another branch of its work is the supplying of printed catalog cards to local libraries everywhere in this country. The local library sends a list of its own books, furnishing in each case the title, the name of the author, and the edition. In return, it receives printed cards, which are copies of the national collection's own cards covering the same books, and which furnish all sorts of details, including the contents of the volumes, a few biographical words about the author in each instance, etc. This saves research which minor libraries could not afford to undertake. Such is the work of the "card section," already mentioned. Fifteen hundred libraries regularly purchase these cards, getting them for a fraction of a cent apiece.

Books Printed on Wall Paper.

A collection of books printed on wall paper in southern cities during the civil war (for lack of more suitable material) is one of the curiosities of the library of congress. Among the heaviest volumes of its shelves are Bibles printed in the middle ages, with brass clasps and wooden covers an inch thick. Contrasting with these giants are dwarfs three by two inches in size, such as "vest pocket editions" of Horace and other classics.

Has Some Naughty Books.

Like every other great library, the national establishment possesses a collection of naughty books, which are not permitted to be seen by the public. Most celebrated of such works is the "Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure," by John Cleland, an English writer of remarkable talent, who, when prosecuted for the publication in question, pleaded poverty as an excuse for producing it.

Much more extraordinary, however, is a famous Chinese classic, "Kin Ping Mei," which gives a satirical picture of the dissolute manners of the age in which it was written. It is a double entendre from beginning to end. If perused with the eye, it appears unobjectionable; but, read aloud, its entire meaning is altered, and it is a string of abominations all through. Such a thing would be possible only with a language like Chinese, in which every word is represented by a distinct written sign, whereas the whole of oral speech is made up of about 400 sounds.

"I Know a Girl There"

No 3 Montreal

BY NELL BRINKLEY

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"OH, I do know a girl there. A Canadian-American girl—a gay, graceful creature—and I wish I could see her now. The girl of the snow and the sleighbells, with the cheeks as hard and scarlet as apples, with the brilliant, liquid eyes of a French father and his black hair with the coppery lights. Seems to me now, when I think, that always she was laughing—with a glimmer of fine white teeth and a tightening of the soft, red lips, and a deepening of the dimple in her slanting cheek. White and black and red she is. Like Snow White in the Glen with the Seven Little Men. The red of the scarlet maple leaf that grows on her mountain sides, the black of starlit night skies, the white of the snow that froths around her skii and powders in a glitter her furs and toque. Last I saw her she stopped in a laughing trek up a steep slope deep in snow, her moccasins layered in white, her winged toboggan on her back, snow diamonds on her lashes, a drift of snow flakes dimming her glory of black and scarlet, one cold little hand bare, the scarlet of her trappings of sweater and mittens matching the blood in her cheeks, the black of her furs the hair that sprayed across her face; and, standing under the black and silver birch and a snow-blanketed fir, she waved a debonair good-by.

Snow-white and rose-red and still-water black—the Montreal girl.

—NELL BRINKLEY.

Sunlight Beauty

ANOTHER VALUABLE ARTICLE FROM THE PEN OF MLLE. CASSASSA.

"Sunshine puts iron in the blood."

"The sunshine-bathed woman is always attractive."

"It strengthens the hair."

"Bathe your body every day in sunshine."

PHOTO BY BROWN BROS.

By Florence Cassassa,

The Prize-Winning Beauty Model.

NO WOMAN will attain the full stature of her beauty until she has learned to the full the value of sunlight.

Sunlight puts iron into the blood. It adds to the number of red corpuscles. It stimulates to greater activity those internal organs which are inclined to laziness, notably the liver. It quickens the energy of all the functions, as, for instance, the pigment at the hair roots whose business it is to give the hair its coloring. That hair which is daily exposed for a reasonable time to the natural light has a richer color and stronger constitution.

The woman who is habitually sunshine bathed is always attractive. The woman who shuts out the sunshine and prefers artificial light always by so much discounts her beauty.

Wholesomeness is a fundamental of womanly beauty. It is the cornerstone of genuine attractiveness. There is no complete wholesomeness without the habit of sunlight absorption. It is the cause of bright eyes, ruddy cheeks, red lips, and the exudation from the body of the very essence of health.

Ah, yes! I hear a great outcry from the city shut-ins. "We cannot all live in the suburbs or the country," they complain. No, but ten cents will pay you your round-trip carfare to them. Everyone is within reach of the parks and plazas with which this city is dotted. No one but lives within walking distance of one of the parks or little green squares that have been aptly styled "the lungs of great cities," because they are, indeed, the breathing places of large communities. It is better to walk to one of these than to ride.

Their Married Life

Helen Gets Into a Disagreeable Verbal Tilt With Warren's Sister.

"HELLO," said Warren, as he stepped up to Helen in the Grand Central station. "Have I kept you waiting long?"

"About five minutes, but that isn't bad for you. Come on, I have the tickets," and Warren led the way toward the train.

They were going out to Carrie's for dinner, and Helen had been dreading this day ever since Fred and Carrie had been in to have dinner with them; somehow she didn't mind so much entertaining Carrie in her own home, but to go out to visit them meant an evening of veiled remarks when she would be so defenceless, because Carrie was Warren's sister, and if she resented anything Warren was sure to complain of her absurd sensitiveness.

She had heard him say so often that it was no wonder she and Carrie did not get along. And then he would accuse her of having no sense of humor, a thing that always made her furious.

In the train she looked idly out of the window, while Warren perused the paper. It was just a short run out to Carrie's, and before they knew it the station was reached, and there was Fred in the machine with Carrie and Warren's mother in the back and little Roy in the front with his father.

"Thought you'd never get here," said Carrie, "and if Helen hasn't another new suit, well, nothing like being rich."

Helen could not help smiling. Already Carrie had begun her tactics, but they were obvious enough to be amusing. Well, she would show Warren that it did not matter to her what Carrie said. However, she was glad when they reached the house and entered the hall.

"Oh, you have a new rug," she said delightedly, "when did you get it, Carrie?"

"It wasn't my doing, trust Fred to do something like that. I told him he was extravagant."

Helen genuinely liked Fred. He never said the caustic things that Carrie did and his kindness was always evident. She knew that he understood Carrie's barbed remarks, for he often covered them with some hastily concocted story of his own.

Warren's Father Appears.

"Want to come upstairs and leave your things?" said Carrie, and Helen followed her sister-in-law upstairs and into the slightly severe bedroom that Helen had always disliked. When they returned downstairs Warren's father had put in an appearance, and Helen was forced to be pleasant while he made several remarks.

"Seems to me we don't see much of you lately," he said.

"Helen's too busy with her friends," said Carrie.

"Yes, and some of them are pretty sporty lookers, too," put in Fred, gayly. "Who was that stunning looking woman, Warren, you had with you last week near Times square?"

Helen caught her breath suddenly and her heart began to beat suffocatingly.

"What night was that?" said Warren easily.

There was a hush, and Fred looked up uneasily, as though he had made a mistake. There was no help for it now, however; he would have to go on.

"Well, now, let me see," he said musingly, "last Monday night, I think it was."

Last Monday night was Warren's lodge night, and Frances had seen him at Times square. What could it mean?

Every one was looking at Warren, and he laughed, although a flush crept up over his face.

"Discovered," he said dramatically, "and by my family. Well, it's a great secret and for the lady's sake I must not disclose her identity. Isn't that what they always say in the plays?"

Helen looked at Warren warily. His air of bravado deceived no one. She looked up and met Carrie's eyes fixed on her coldly. It came to Helen with a flash of intuition that Carrie would be glad of any unhappiness that might be in store for Warren's wife, even Warren's mother would sympathize with her son and she would have no one. Why did the family dislike her so?

Carrie excused herself a minute later to see about dinner, and little Roy came over and leaned against her knee—he adored his Aunt Helen and she loved him, although he was frightfully spoiled.

"Tell me a story," he begged.

The tension was happily relieved at that moment, and Helen lifted him on her knee and began the story of the three bears. When Carrie came in a few minutes later Roy was having too good a time to leave.

"I don't want to go to bed," he whined, and when Carrie took him by the arm none too gently he protested, and, lying down on the floor, began to yell lustily.

"None of that, young man," said Fred striding over and seizing the sobbing child. "You go upstairs like a man or we won't have that party I was telling you about."

"I want Aunt Helen to tell me a story," he cried.

"Some other time, dear," said Helen, trying to pacify him.

The Trouble Begins.

"Now," shrieked Roy.

"Carrie, will you let me take him upstairs?" said Helen, conscious that she would be blamed for this display of temper.

"What for?" He might as well learn first as last that he has to mind."

"Is that what you do for Winifred?" said Warren's mother, "no wonder she is spoiled."

"I don't think she is spoiled," retorted Helen. "Winifred goes to bed long before this, anyway."

As soon as she had made this remark Helen knew that it was the wrong one; why had she said it?

"I suppose that means that Roy should have been put to bed long ago," said Carrie frigidly.

Helen with very pink cheeks determined to finish the conversation as long as things were going that way.

"Well," she said, "Roy isn't any older than Winifred, and I have always believed that children should be in bed before six."

"Indeed," sniffed Carrie. "Well, at least Roy isn't too good for public school if he isn't in bed at six o'clock."

Warren's mother smiled delightedly, and at this point Roy began to scream again. Carrie with scant ceremony took the child from the room and when she returned dinner was eaten in comparative silence.

Helen with a full heart hardly knew how she forced down anything. She avoided Warren's eyes as though she were ashamed to look at him and prayed inwardly that they might get away early. She must know about this thing one way or another or she would surely go mad. Would the time never pass?—Copyright, 1915, International News Service.

OPHELIA